

COMPULSORY MISEDUCATION

Paul Goodman



Penguin Education Specials



Much of the sharpest and most fundamental thinking about education has been coming from America. This book is one of five titles published simultaneously by Penguin Education. It would be wrong to call these writers a school – they are widely different in stance and style. But they are united, firstly, by their readiness to think of education in (literally) radical ways and to propose radical solutions; secondly, by their deep concern that education should exist primarily for the benefit of those who learn; and lastly, and above all, by their conviction that education – in the modern world as in America – has reached crisis point.

'When, at a meeting, I offer that perhaps we already have too much formal schooling and that, under present conditions, the more we get the less education we will get, the others look at me oddly and proceed to discuss how to get more money for schools and how to upgrade the schools. I realize suddenly that I am confronting a mass superstition.'

The mass superstition in question, which is the target of this classic and iconoclastic work, is that education can only be achieved by the use of institutions like the school. Paul Goodman argues that, on the contrary, subjecting young people to institutionalized learning stunts and distorts their natural intellectual development, makes them hostile to the very idea of education, and finally turns out regimented, competitive citizens likely only to aggravate our current social ills. He prescribes an increased involvement in the natural learning patterns of family and community, and of the sort of relationships fostered in master–apprentice situations.

'Its radical questioning of the whole system is a revelation to people who have been schooled to take the system for granted' Ian Lister *The Times Higher Education Supplement*

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